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A Message From the Dean

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A Message from the Dean

The veterinary profession has responsibility for the health and productivity of the livestock and poultry populations of the United States. Today, many in the profession are worried



about this obligation. First is the menace of agroterrorism and recognition of the ease with which an organism such as the foot-and-mouth disease virus

could be maliciously introduced into our livestock and wildlife populations with devastating consequences to our economy and our way of life.

A second concern comes from the threat of new and reemerging infectious diseases that are invading our shores with increasing frequency—monkeypox, SARS, mad cow disease, avian influenza, West Nile fever. They are mostly zoonotic diseases, diseases transmissible to humans. Their trespass into our animal populations is the inevitable consequence of global

trade, world population growth, air travel, poverty, and squalor. It is unlikely that these ingredients will change in the foreseeable future, and foreign animal diseases will almost certainly continue to invade United States. The worry is that we are ill prepared to defend against either of these threats.

Government support to meet the needs for agricultural biosecurity, if it is to be forthcoming, will come out of fear of the unknown, from perceived threats to the food supply from diseases such as mad cow disease or avian influenza. Yet the needs for biosecurity on the farm, in the profession, and in our teaching hospitals are already here, and the threats are serious. In the past four years, multidrug-resistant *Salmonella* Newport has swept through the U.S. dairy industry, likely developing from the profligate use of antibiotics. All mammals can be affected, but it is most severe in cattle and horses, for whom it can be lethal. Many seemingly normal animals carry and shed the organism, complicating its control. We have had to close the George D. Widener Hospital for Large Animals at New Bolton Center because of an outbreak of *S. Newport*.

In humans, *S. Newport* causes diarrhea, pain, fever, and malaise; although not common, it is of special concern in young children and may become severe in individuals who are immunosuppressed. We are not aware of any infection among faculty, staff, or students at New Bolton Center.

Without effective antibiotics, the only way to contain the spread of *S. Newport* is by rigorous biosecurity measures, routine disinfection, foot baths, personal hygiene, changes of shoes and clothing as workers and veterinarians move between facilities, and limited access to animal housing.

We shall institute these measures at New Bolton Center once we have completed the arduous task of decontaminating our facilities. We shall also routinely culture all animals entering the hospital and isolate any that test positive for *Salmonella*. Our goal is to offer better, safer care than ever before at New Bolton Center and to sustain our reputation as one of the world's premier equine hospitals.

Alan M. Kelly

The Gilbert S. Kahn Dean of Veterinary Medicine

2004 Penn Annual Conference

As the country's oldest continuing education conference for veterinarians and veterinary technicians, the 104th Penn Annual Conference, held on March 11–12, 2004, at the Adams Mark Hotel in Philadelphia, attracted more than 600 veterinarians and 200 veterinary technicians. In addition, 280 faculty and veterinary staff and technicians, and 50 fourth-year students attended from the School of Veterinary Medicine.

Internationally recognized speakers addressed a wide range of topics to veterinarians in the Small Animal, Equine, and Food Animal sessions. Topics discussed this year included: Minimally Invasive Procedures, Clinical Therapeutics, Respiratory, Ophthalmology, Equine Laminitis, Making Dairy Facilities Work, Safeguarding American Agriculture, Crisis Cases in Critical Care, Dentistry, Laser Surgery, and Behavior. Small-animal technicians had a specialized two-day seminar that covered several topics, including: Understanding and Management of Drug Therapy and Clinical Tests and Results, and Exotic Pets:



Mammals, Reptiles, and Birds. Many sessions were standing room only.

The first day ended with a well-attended Dean's Reception hosted by **Dean Alan M. Kelly**. The Office of Development and Alumni Relations hosted several popular alumni and donor appreciation events: Successful Financial Planning for Veterinary Professionals Luncheon with Jeff Brown, *The Philadelphia Inquirer* personal finance columnist, which was generously sponsored by Commerce Bank; the Rush

Shippen Huidekoper Society Breakfast; and a Pacesetter and Class Agent Luncheon.

The Conference gratefully acknowledges the financial support of sponsors, patrons, and exhibitors who sold out our exhibit hall.

Please save the dates of Thursday and Friday, March 10 and 11, for the 2005 Conference at the Adam's Mark Hotel. Pennsylvania has raised its continuing education requirement for veterinarians to 30 hours over two years,

and we plan to increase the number of continuing education hours available annually at the Penn Annual Conference to 15 hours, beginning with the 2005 Penn Annual Conference. Although the schedule has not been finalized yet, the Conference will remain two days in length. Please bookmark the website, <alumni.vet.upenn.edu/pennannualconference.html>, and check your mail in the winter for the 2005 Penn Annual Conference brochure.